The Episcopal Diocese of Maryland
Reporting Clergy Misconduct
Policy and Procedures

Policy Statement

The Episcopal Diocese of Maryland affirms respect, responsibility, and caring between all persons. Inappropriate conduct of church leaders, whether lay or ordained, will not be tolerated.

The disciplinary process for clergy is governed by the canons of The Episcopal Church. Recent updates of these canons incorporate an underlying desire that the process be as open, receptive, transparent, and as theologically based as possible, while also respecting the dignity and confidentiality of all parties.

Prevention Through Education

The Episcopal Diocese of Maryland requires successful completion of training in sexual abuse prevention for all clergy, lay employees, and anyone, including volunteers who regularly work with children.

Training must be completed within the first six (6) months of service. We also suggest that lay Sunday School teachers participate in the training. Indeed, we invite and encourage all adults who make decisions about or participate in programs for children to complete the training, including vestry members.

In addition, *Safe- guarding God's People* addresses the ways in which adults are to be in safe and respectable relationships with one another. Clergy and other adults in positions of leadership are required to complete this training.

What Is An Offense?

An offense is defined as a violation of the standards of conduct for clergy to engage in certain behaviors and refrain from others. (Canon 3: Of Accountability; Canon 4: Of Standards of Conduct).

Taking Action

Victims of assault or abuse experience varying degrees of trauma and anxiety. Emotional and physical symptoms such as fear, anxiety, anger, shock, depression, insomnia, headaches and/or nausea are common. Many victims also feel guilt and self-blame, especially if the suspect is a member of the clergy.

Regardless of symptoms, victims of an offense should be encouraged to:

- Go to a hospital for immediate medical care if physical trauma has occurred. The medical staff provides assistance for injuries, tests for medical evidence, and resources for emotional help. Note: Do not wash or change clothes before calling or going for help as this may destroy important evidence. The collection of medical evidence does not presume charges will be pressed against the assailant, but ensures evidence will be available.

- Report any offense of a criminal nature to local law enforcement officials.

- Report any offense involving an ordained member of the diocese, by contacting an intake officer as noted below.

Reporting Procedures

Anyone may report an offense in either in written or oral form. There's no requirement that the person providing the information must identify him/herself.

To report an offense, contact one of the following Intake Officers (IO) or call the Diocesan Center (410-467-1399):

- Dr. Pamela Cochran: 434-242-2447 (mobile)
- Ms. Patricia McClean: 443-310-8269 (mobile)
- The Rev. Canon Mary Sulerud: 301-717-5694 (mobile)

Someone should respond to your inquiry within 24 hours. The IO is designated by the Bishop and will first determine if the information reported constitutes an offense. If so, the IO may conduct a preliminary investigation, or refer the matter to a Reference Panel (RP) as well as the Church Attorney.

The Bishop is required to provide an appropriate pastoral response to any persons who are affected by an alleged offense, including the person reporting the offense, or to the victim (if not the person reporting) or the accused.

If the Reference Panel (RP) concludes the reported information might constitute an offense, it has a number of options based on the situation, one of which includes calling for a formal investigation through the elected Disciplinary Board of the diocese for further action.

If the IO or RP or Disciplinary Board dismisses the matter or if the person reporting the information wishes to appeal the decision, the person should contact the IO for further action.

Anonymous Report

If a complainant wishes to remain anonymous, the IO will take a "third person" report. This report allows a person to provide a detailed report about the offense without the obligation of pursuing an investigation and/or pressing charges. The diocese can initiate an investigation only after the appointed RP has reviewed the report and has recommended this action.

Open reporting is encouraged because it may provide important information for protecting the community-at-large.

Confidentiality

Every possible effort will be made to ensure confidentiality. Whenever possible, the name of the complainant will be withheld if the complainant wishes. Action requiring disclosure or identification of the complainant will generally **not** take place without the complainant's consent, unless it's necessary to protect the health or safety of others. If so, the complainant will be informed.

To also provide confidentiality for the accused, once a complaint is made to the IO, the complainant will not be informed of subsequent action toward the accused unless or until such point as it is appropriate to share that information.